REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 23-31 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1-22 have been canceled in favor of new claims 23-31. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is thanked for returning a fully initialed copy of the Form PTO-1449 filed on September 13, 2004. However, the Examiner lined through a foreign patent document and an Other Document from the Form PTO-1449 filed with the application on July 14, 2004. Applicants respectfully submit that these two documents should have been forwarded from the International Bureau to the U.S. Receiving Office since they are cited on the International Search Report that was filed with the U.S. national stage application. Nonetheless, attached hereto are copies of the two documents which were lined-out by the Examiner. In addition, a fresh Form PTO-1449 is provided for the Examiner's convenience.

In addition, Applicants filed an Information Disclosure Statement on January 9, 2006 (copy provided along with Form PTO-1449 and date stamped postcard filing receipt). The Examiner is requested to return an initialed copy of the Form PTO-1449 with the next Office Action.

Claims 1-4, 7, 9-15 and 21-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. By this Amendment, independent claim 1 has been canceled and replaced with new claim 23 which eliminates the term "mesh-like base" in favor of the term "mesh base".

In addition, claim 22 has been canceled and no equivalent version is provided in new claims 23-31.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 7, 9-14 and 21-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Kemeny (U.S. Patent No. 5,560,162) in view of Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-319472, noted as the equivalent of U.S. Patent No. 6,548,188. This rejection is respectfully traversed in as much as it may apply to new claims 23-31.

Claim 23 is directed to a friction damper comprising, *inter alia*, a base body, a support secured to the base body and having a through hole and only one slit communicating with the through hole so that the diameter of the through hole can be reducible, a rod that extends through the through hole of the support, and a friction member which has a hollow cylindrical portion interposed between said support and said rod in the through hole of the support and only one collar united with the hollow cylindrical portion. The friction member is fixed immovably with respect to the relative movement of the rod in the axial direction with respect to the base body at the collar. The hollow cylindrical portion on the friction member has only one slit extending from one end face to another end face thereof in the axial direction so that the diameter of the hollow cylindrical portion can be reducible. With this structure, the claimed friction damper is simple and has stable damping characteristics over a long period of time.

Neither Kemeny nor JP '472 teaches or discloses this subject matter. Kemeny discloses a seismic brake comprising a plurality of similar blocks 2 disposed adjacent to one another, as well as a liner that is secured to the block 2 in recess 16 with shoulder 16A. Accordingly, Kemeny does not teach or suggest the subject matter of claim 23. Moreover, JP '472 was merely relied upon for its teaching of a mesh-like base material and does not make up for the deficiencies of Kemeny noted above.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 12-15 and 21-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over East, Jr. et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,901,829) in view of JP '472. This rejection is respectfully traversed. East, Jr. et al. discloses an axial friction brake designed to minimize piping dynamic motion while accommodating thermal expansion. However, East, Jr. et al. does not disclose a support having only one slit communicating with the through-hole so that the diameter of the through hole can be reducible, as recited in claim 23. Further, East, Jr. et al. does not teach or suggest a friction member in which only one collar is united with said hollow cylindrical portion, and is fixed immovably with respect to the relative movement of the rod in the axial direction with respect to the base body at said collar. Further, East, Jr. et al. does not teach or suggest that the hollow cylindrical portion has only one slit extending from one end face to another end face thereof in the axial direction so that the diameter of the hollow cylindrical portion can be reducible, as recited in claim 23. JP '472 was relied upon for teaching of the mesh friction material and does not make up for the deficiencies noted above.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all the claims are patentable and that the entire application is in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable to place the application in better condition for allowance, he is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By: _____

Paul T. Bowen
Reg. No. 38,009

PTB:jck
Attachments:
Form PTO-1449 filed July 14, 2004 and 2 References
Information Disclosure Statement filed January 9, 2006 and
Date Stamped Postcard Receipt

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